

## **LaShay D. Harris**

Candidate for Rochester City Council

South District

- Name one issue on which you disagree with the current administration and why.

I am looking forward to working with Mayor Lovely Warren and her administration. There are a lot of positive things happening in this administration. I plan to join the efforts by staying engaged with my district constituents and raise their concerns as we tackle problems by working on solutions together.

- What is the most important issue facing your district, and what is a specific proposal or action you propose to address it?

Affordable housing is the key to the south district since the market values of homes have increased. It is important that we work to keep affordable housing a part of our district. The city cannot force landlords and property owners to set a certain rate however; the city can provide incentives to developers and property owners who are rehabilitating homes. In the south district residents are in fear of gentrification. We are facing the same issues that has plagued sections of the south district in the 1970's and 80's. That is why the 19th Ward Community Association was organized to fight blockbusting and redlining in the neighborhood. Housing again is a number one issue for this district. I will do everything I can to protect our seniors who have owned their houses for years and the person or families who may become potential victims of the predatory practices that comes with the gentrification process. This is a South District challenge we must work on.

- Please identify one area in the city budget where you think the city should commit more resources than is currently proposed and why.

The city has AA credit rating and has done a tremendous job with allocating resources to the departments in the past. This year we are currently working on the budget as proposed and as council member I have identified that we must continue to support youth services, development, fire and police. (This response is during the week of the city's budget hearings.)

- What policies would you pursue to address housing affordability, evictions and/or landlord-tenant relations in your district?

The city assigned city court judges to rotate in adjudicating landlord tenant issues for the city and a judge for code violations. I would love to explore ways we can chip away at eliminating evictions without just cause in city court. Landlord tenant relations is a complex fluid issue since it involves city, county and state government. As your city councilperson, it is imperative that I educate residents and get them access to resources and proactively work with community groups to reform and bring reasonable changes at the state level. Citizens suggested the following reforms which mostly involve state legislation changes:

- \* consider universal rent stabilization or rent control
- \* reform to sanctions that are triggered automatically
- \* an increase in public assistance payments for housing needs

Issues related to housing affordability have been on the rise. It is a complex issue since there must be a balance when coming up with solutions from the tenant and landlords. I would start by having facilitated town hall discussions followed by surveys from all parties affected. These are some of the things we can work on together.

- Will you vote for the Police Accountability Board as proposed in November – why or why not?

I voted for the PAB as proposed. I listened to most of the constituents in the South District who have voiced their support for the PAB board. This will give the voters an opportunity to vote on the PAB as proposed. Putting the power back to the voter.

- Do you support Mayor Warren's push for a referendum calling for removal of the elected school board in favor of a state takeover of RCSD/appointed board, and why?

*No answer provided.*

- What current policy or practice of city government would you seek to change if (re)elected, and why?

I believe our city is moving in the right direction. Downtown has begun its resurgence of business, housing and other developments. Neighborhoods have received support with incentives for home ownership by way of various programs. I would like to help the current administration work on expanding those opportunities for neighborhoods. I would love to work on getting more neighborhood focused assets that would minimize the need for residents to travel outside the neighborhood for resources. As council person for the South District, I will have a vital role in informing constituents about these opportunities and development projects in the city. I am looking forward to getting things done in the South District.